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State Conservation Commission  
10th and Mulberry Sts.  
Des Moines 8, Iowa

# IOWA CONSERVATIONIST

VOLUME 5

AUGUST 15, 1946

NUMBER 8

## STATE FAIR EXHIBIT 25 YEARS OLD

### Passing Years Prove Wisdom of Construction of Fairgrounds Fish and Game Building

**T**HE Modern Fish and Game Exhibit at the State Fair Grounds reaches its twenty-fifth birthday during the current fair. It has suffered many growing pains in the past, but it has now reached a proud status as one of the finest.

Even prior to 1921 exhibits of fish and game had been attempted at the fair but they were primitive and meager.

Mac Coon, who was in charge of the show for many years, used to recall the 1920 layout with mixed emotions. The aquarium consisted of several stock tanks in which various species of fish were held. If the visitor wished to see the catfish, for instance, Mac would dip into the catfish tank with a dip net, hold the fish up for inspection for a few minutes, and then replace them in the water.

It was a hardy soul, or at least one who brought along his overhoes, who could approach the tanks through the mud, close enough to observe their contents. The overflow from the tanks—and here was plenty—ran into a dug-out mud puddle in which a flock of semi-domestic wild ducks paddled and splashed.

W. E. Albert, State Game Warden from 1919 until his death in 1932, and a firm believer in conservation through education, decided that hit and miss display of our native fish and game was undesirable. Albert made plans for the modern exposition, and over a period of several years the present splendid fish and game building and aquarium were constructed.

Albert's plan was severely criticized in many quarters. He was accused of spending the hunting license money without regard to the best interests of sportsmen. The buildings were known as "Al-

(Continued on page 61)



The first permanent exhibit constructed in what is now the Fish and Game Building at the fair grounds was the beautiful aquarium built in 1921. This was the first attempt at the State Fair Grounds to display a fish collection in a modern manner.

### Fair Visitors To Miss Mac and Sammy

**G**EORGE B. COON, or Mac, as he was familiarly called by thousands, and one of the most colorful features of the Fish and Game Exhibit, will not be there this year. Mac, father of the State Fair Fish and Game Exhibits, keeper of the animals, early day game warden, father confessor of modern conservation officers, spinner of tall tales, lover of life, and showman extraordinary, is dead. He died "in harness" in Farmington State Park at the age of eighty.

During the last prewar fair, while holding an armful of deodorized skunks and entertaining a group of wide-eyed youngsters with a running commentary of harmless yarns and wisecracks, Mac was interrupted by a helper with informa-

tion that the wolves were fighting. Leisuredly replacing the skunks, Mac separated the snarling wolves and, turning to his helper, said, "Paul, I just live for the State Fair. If they ever quit the fair exhibit I think I'll call it quits, too."

December 7 the Japs attacked Pearl Harbor and the army took over the State Fairgrounds. In 1942 the fair was cancelled and when fair time rolled around in '43 with no fair coming up, Mac Coon called it quits for good.

In all of Mac's thirty-five fair years, employees recall only a single instance when harsh words escaped his lips. The provocation was never repeated.

(Continued on page 64)

### WHAT MAMMAL IS THAT?

By Thomas G. Scott

Iowa Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit  
(Part I of two parts)

**M**AMMALS are commonly called "animals." This can lead to misunderstanding because the term "animals" includes not only the mammals but also birds, fishes, and in fact, all living organisms not belonging to the plant kingdom.

Just what then are mammals? In Iowa a mammal may be defined as a warm-blooded creature having a backbone, a body covering of hair, and two pairs of limbs. Mammals nurse their young at the mammary glands (breasts), hence the name mammal. Some mammals such as whales, porpoises and sea-cows either have no hind limbs or have nearly lost them.

#### Mammals in Iowa History

As with all forms of wildlife the mammal life of Iowa has been greatly affected by settlement of the land. The first white settlers to enter the state found mammals that no longer occur here. There were herds of elk and buffalo on the open prairie, and deer were seen in the openings along the edges of groves. Valuable furbearers, especially muskrats, minks, otters and beavers were present wherever habitats were available. An occasional black bear was encountered in the timber along the water courses. Wolves and coyotes proved troublesome and made vigilant care of domestic stock necessary.

The mammals, probably more than any other form of wildlife, (Continued on page 60)



# Iowa Conservationist

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ROBERT D. BLUE, Governor of Iowa

F. T. SCHWOB, Director

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★JOHNSON, H. C.	

\*Killed in action.

## ALL FISHING IS GOOD

Speaking of fishing, we wonder if the thought has ever occurred to you, too, that ALL fishing is good, and that sometimes there is that happy state of affairs when it's very good. That is, you don't have to catch fish to enjoy yourself, although a strike now and then does enliven the proceedings. The way we look at it, the fishing (and the hunting in season) provides a wonderful excuse to get out into the open where a fellow can find that mental relaxation that is so refreshing to the spirit and that sweeps the cobwebs from the mind. And then, too, you know, if a fellow goes fishing and gets nothing but the relaxation—well, then there are no fish to clean, and that is a reward of some kind or another in itself!

—Iowa City Press-Citizen

## YOUR BOY AND MINE

After a male baby has grown out of long clothes and triangles and has acquired pants, freckles and so much dirt that relatives do not dare to kiss it between meals, it becomes a boy. A boy is nature's answer to that false belief that there is no such thing as perpetual motion. A boy can swim like a fish, run like a deer, climb like a squirrel, balk like a mule, bellow like a bull, eat like a pig or act like a jackass, according to climatic conditions.

He is a piece of skin stretched over an appetite. A noise covered with smudges. He is called a tornado because he comes at the most unexpected times, hits the most unexpected places and leaves everything a wreck behind him. He is a growing animal of superlative promise, to be fed, watered and kept warm, a joy forever, a periodic nuisance, the problem of our times, the hope of a nation.

Every boy born is evidence that God is not discouraged of man. Were it not for boys, the newspapers would go unread and a thousand shows would go bankrupt. Boys are useful in running errands. A boy can easily do the family errands with the aid of five

or six adults. The zest with which a boy does an errand is equalled only by the speed of a turtle on a July day. The boy is a natural spectator. He watches parades, fires, fights, ball games, automobiles, boats and airplanes with equal fervor, but will not watch the clock. The man who invents a clock that will stand on its head and sing a song when it strikes will win the undying gratitude of millions of families whose boys are forever coming to dinner about supper time.

Boys faithfully imitate their dads in spite of all efforts to teach them good manners. A boy, if not washed too often, and if kept in a cool, quiet place after each accident, will survive broken bones, hornets, swimming holes, fights and nine helpings of pie. (P. S. And I hope that answers the question of several of my friends as to whether or not the time ever comes when you don't want to wring the neck of "that kid of mine.")

—Frank Powers  
Cedar Rapids Gazette.

Soil, water, air, and sunshine are basic essentials to life on the earth. While no more essential than the others, soil is a factor that man can improve or impair. It must be used wisely if this country is to continue suitable for human occupancy.

## WHY NOT SEE IOWA WILDERNESS?

WE ARE guilty of having traveled to Wisconsin, Minnesota, and the Dakotas, even into Canada, just to look at wilderness, and meet up with all the different species of bugs, crickets, mosquitoes, and other uncomfortable situations for a vacation. In fact, this year we traveled far just to get darned good and tired and gander at trees, vines, water, and so forth.

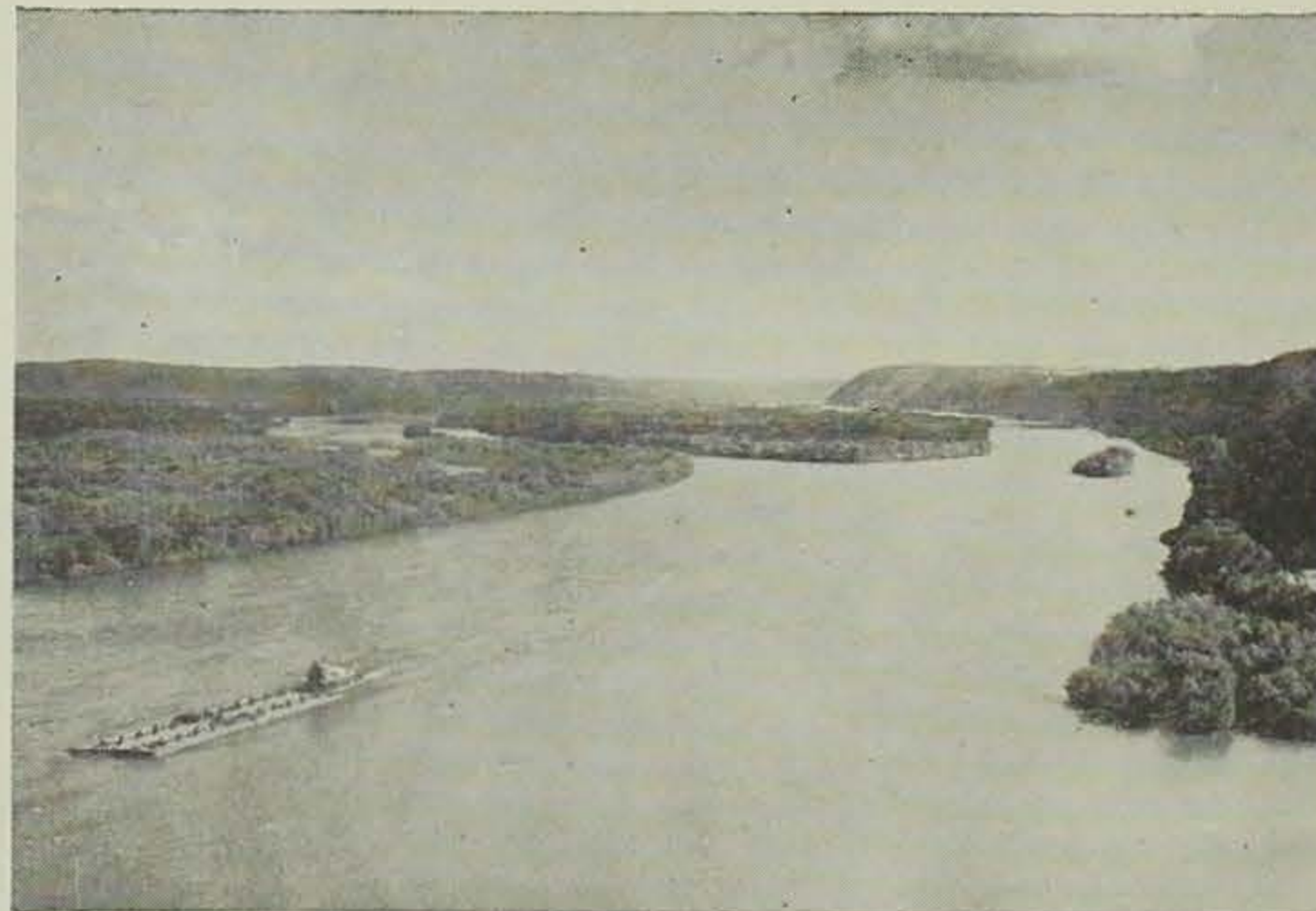
There is much to look at and do in Iowa—so much that most of us little dream of the beauties and pleasures that are close to home.

'Twas our pleasure over the weekend to explore thirty miles or more of the daddy river of them

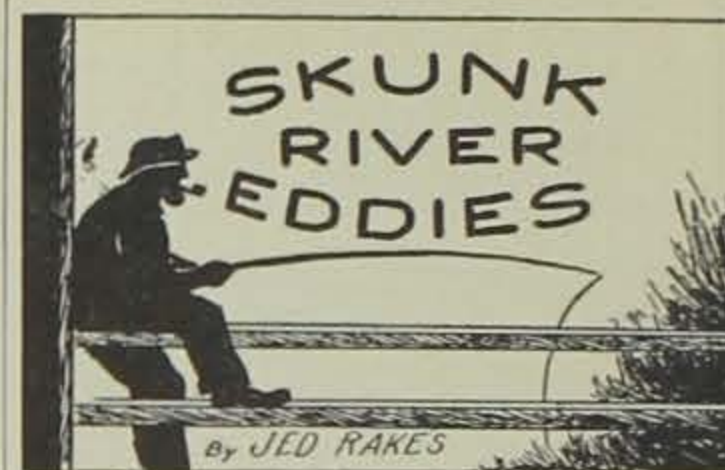
all, the Mississippi. Traveling in a cabin boat was our first experience, but the scenery along the route was beautiful. As we rolled slowly along we could not help but think that we are right about the folks—most of us—who live so far away from water miss a lot of the God-given pleasures of this life.

There are just as large fish and just as many and just as good kinds in the Mississippi river as there are anywhere in northern states, yet folks travel far, far north to get fish and look at wilderness, when the banks of the Mississippi offer all of these and more too.

—Reinbeck Courier.



The daddy of them all, the Mississippi, as seen from an overlook in the new national monument area in Allamakee and Clayton counties. See Iowa first. Jim Sherman Photo.



The feller I envy the most is the feller whose wife cleans all the fish he brings home.

When I hear a feller say catch fer ketch, minnows fer minners, and call a fish pole a rawd, I keep a safe distance away from him to pervide against his gittin' ingered.

Jes' about the quickest way to hurt a feller's feelins is ter tell him he don't know how ter fish.

Next to gittin' a whiff o' pork chops fryin' an' coffee cookin', when you're comin' in from your blind on a cold evening, they ain't nothin' so pleasant at a duck huntin' camp as to git up in the dark o' the mornin' an' wash your face in ice water with soap that smells like a fine lady.

A feller's jes' about sure to find nice people in a house when they's some ol' cane fish poles standin' up against the kitchen.

## TOP SOIL SAVED, DOLLARS EARNED

When Tom Kelley of the United States soil conservation service appeared in Cedar Rapids recently, he quoted some figures about the increase, in bushels, of soybeans and corn on contoured and stripped land that seemed a bit preposterous to me at the time. Those figures have bothered me as they will you, I hope, but since he said they came from Iowa State college at Ames I couldn't stow them away without more investigation. After some checking on them I am convinced that he was too cautious in his statement. Here is the way he told it. "If all the corn and soybeans planted in Iowa in 1944 had been planted on the contour, then the farmers in the state would have had \$37,000,000 more money to spend in 1945 than they actually did have. That was based on the minimum increases in bushels per acre of two and a half bushels for beans and five bushels for corn."

Even if you are not the least bit concerned about saving that precious and necessary top soil, and your only goal is the amount of money you can garner during your stay here, then you just can't ignore the above figures. And that goes for every one of you that reads this column today.

—Frank Powers  
Cedar Rapids Gazette

The effectiveness of a game and fish law enforcement organization depends quite largely on the ability of that organization to gain the confidence and support of all the people.



## WE ATE A SNAPPER

By Richard F. Trump

Graduate Assistant,  
Iowa State College

IT LOOKED like beef, smelled like fish, and tasted like snapping turtle.

That's of course just how a good snapper should taste, but I mention the fact for the benefit of those who like to say that muskrat tastes like rabbit, eel like salmon, rattlesnake like chicken, and cattail roots like mashed potatoes. If you want to pick a quick argument, just make such a statement around people who eat.

But if you say that snapper tastes like turtle, you're safe.

When I first met the hero of this tale he was taking an overland short cut from one pool to another along the Skunk River, and I was on my way from one woodchuck den to another.

After snapping viciously several times at a stick which I offered, he agreed to come along, but only after I got a good grip on his tail. Our argument continued right up to the time the snapper lost its head under a scout axe.

After the carcass had hung by the tail to bleed for a half hour, I cut through the skin around the edge of the shell, using a razor blade in one of those dime-store handles. I'd never use a knife on the skin of a snapper, even if I had one sharp enough; it's like arying through a couple of layers of sandpaper—super grade!

Once inside, things went more smoothly, and by the time I had removed the leg, shoulder, and hip muscles from beneath the shell, there was a sizeable pile of meat in the pan.

From that point on, it was a cooperative venture. After checking Shbrook and Sater, "Cooking Wild Game," which we found at the public library, the better half selected the better parts of a half dozen recipes on turtle cookery. And that night we had snapper.

Now I know there are epicures

and gourmets who could offer more thoughtful opinions; but here is how one family reacted:

The gal who does the cooking, and who is usually the sharpest critic of the lot, thought it was good meat. She said it tasted something like veal.

Our five-year-old, whose current favorite on the phonograph was a record about "Myrtle the Turtle," did not try to hide a certain amount of sympathy for the reptile. He ate mostly crackers and milk that night.

Our two-year-old, who confines his speech to essentials, just said, "More."

As for myself, I've already said it tasted like snapping turtle. I might add, however, that in the future smart turtles will not cross my path.

### THE BEAUTY OF BACKBONE

Hundreds of people throughout Fayette, Buchanan and Clayton counties daily take advantage of the beauties of Backbone State Park. And the swimming opportunities there are enjoyed by young and old alike.

The state deserves a great deal of credit for the manner in which the park is operated and kept up.

The beach is well supervised and the bath house properly and efficiently run. The 18 cabins are in constant use and in far better shape than one would expect at an ordinary resort. The price is reasonable and the opportunity for rest and relaxation just as great as though one were to drive several hundred miles north. Fish abound there and there is little one could ask for in the way of rest and relaxation that is not found in this beauty spot south of Strawberry Point.

Last Sunday was typical. The beach was swarming with people swimming, sunning themselves, resting.

There are a great many attractive state parks but for real beauty in a wooded wonderland, we believe Backbone State Park is the finest of them all.

—Oelwein Register



Soil conservation practices insure clear streams, less rapid run-off, and more stable water levels. Here a Conservation Commission crew is running contours on the Hooper area in Warren County. Contouring on this watershed is necessary to guarantee clear water for Lake Ahquabi. Jim Sherman Photo.

## SOIL CONSERVATION IS A MUST

MUDDY waters continue to plague the fishermen hereabouts, although by now the Iowa River is beginning to show some signs, at least, of resuming a more normal water condition after the recent heavy rains. Lake Macbride, I discovered as the result of a mid-week expedition, also has improved tremendously from last weekend's muddy condition—and the fish are starting to hit again. While the bass and the bluegills weren't too enthusiastic the other night, they nevertheless were rising to our offerings and giving us some fun even if they didn't hit with that slam-bang vigor that means hooked fish and meat in the icebox.

Meanwhile, these muddy waters of recent days again emphasize, to all who will recognize the fact, that SOIL CONSERVATION IS ONE OF THE PRIME NEEDS OF THE DAY. And it behooves all of us—fishermen and hunters and farmers and all people—to get behind and support in all ways possible the efforts in behalf of soil conservation that will be instituted in the new Johnson county soil conservation district. To continue to allow a state of affairs where untold tons of our rich top soil are washed into the streams in time of heavy rains is to permit the waste of one of our most priceless and irreplaceable possessions.

If all of us would but support the efforts to conserve our soil we would in time find our faith and our efforts rewarded. For the farmer, better farming practices would mean bigger crop yields and a more certainly continuing fertility of his soil; for the fisherman, soil conservation practices would assure clearer streams and a less

rapid runoff in times of heavy precipitation and a more stable and ever-improving fishing; for the hunter, erosion control through the planting of gullies to shrubs, trees and grasses would mean more and better cover for the wild game that calls him afield.

I only hope that as the farmers, in co-operation with soil conservation officials, increase their efforts toward erosion control in Johnson county they will call upon the sportsmen of the county whenever they need their assistance. If they do so, I am sure they will be willing and eager to help.

—Ron Tallman,  
Iowa City Press-Citizen

### GREEN PASTURES CALL

It would be a safe bet that if Heery Woods State Park was located 25 miles or farther from Clarksville it would have more attraction for local people than it does in its present location. For some reason we are all prone to overlook the good things we have in our own back-yards.

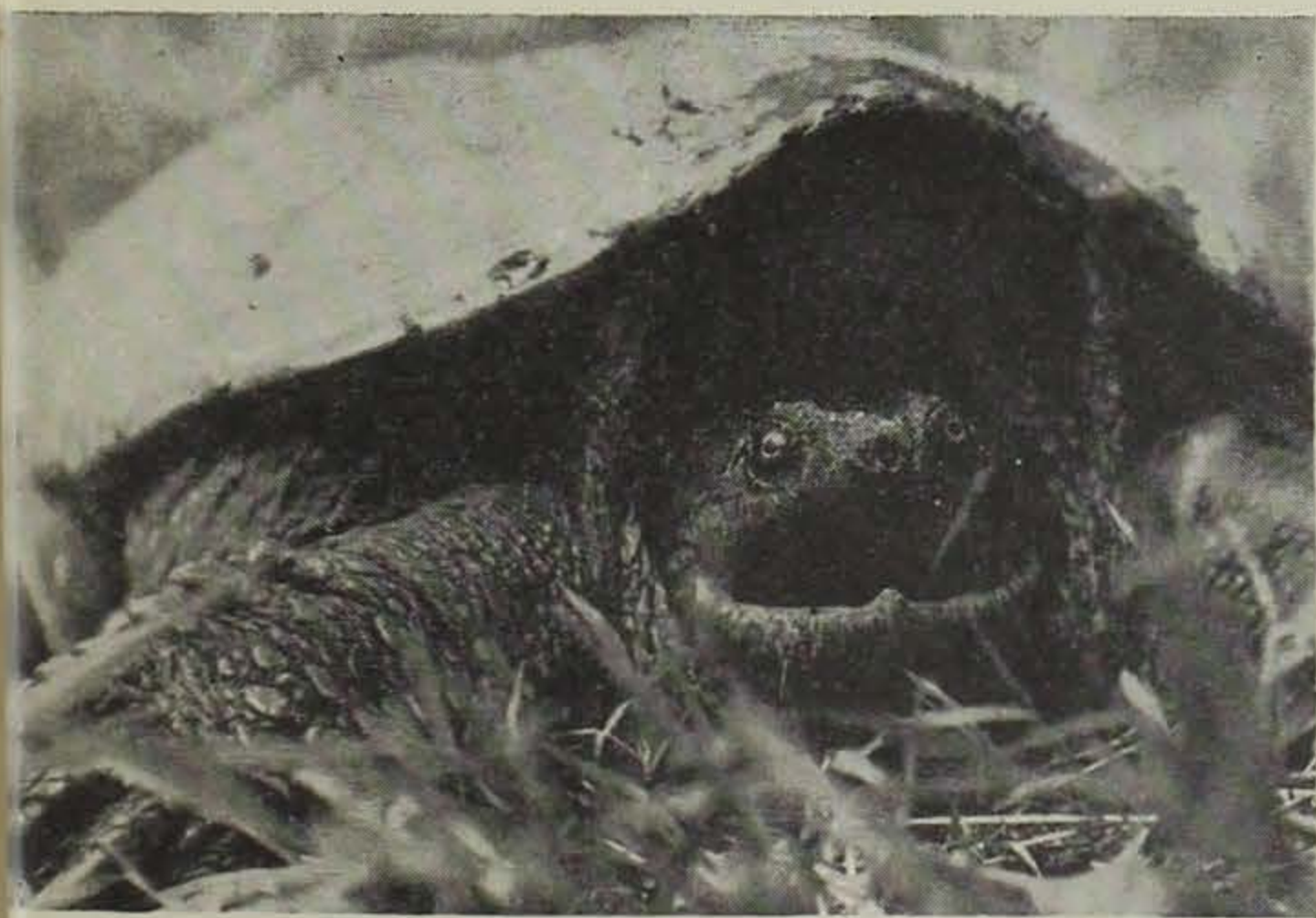
Don't misunderstand us — the park has a lot of visitors, especially on Sundays and holidays but the local people do not avail themselves of its pleasures through the week in the numbers one would expect.

Clarksville is very fortunate in having this wonderful park so close and we would like to see a greater use made of it by this community. Many cities pay thousands of dollars annually for upkeep of parks that can in no way compare with Heery Woods.

Incidentally, Ben Hamilton, our present custodian, is doing a swell job of maintenance at the park.

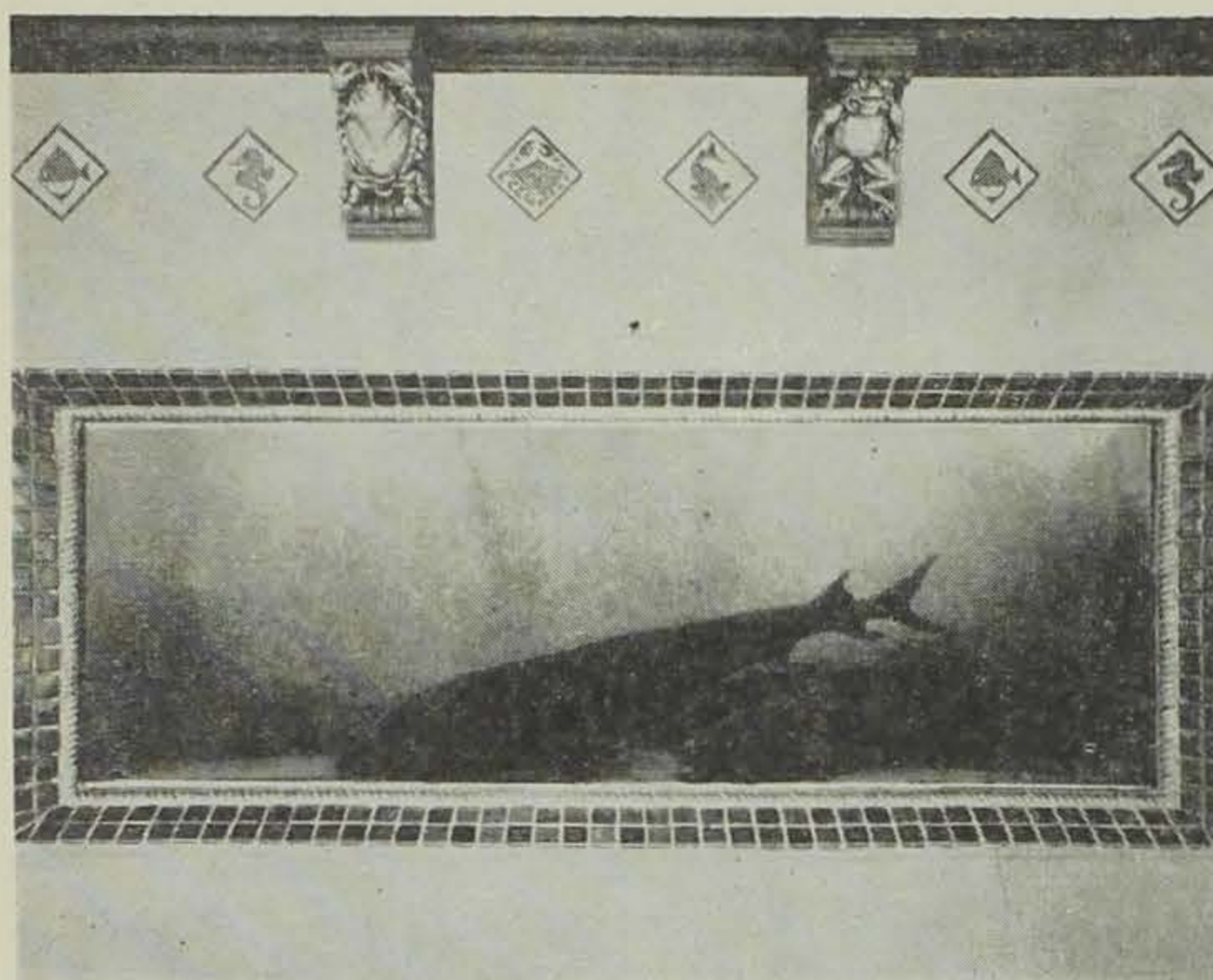
—Clarksville Star

The fox family is evenly distributed over the countries north of the equator but there are no true foxes native to any of the countries south of the equator.



Dick Trump met this eleven pound snapping turtle while it was taking an overland shortcut from one pond to another on the Skunk River bottoms. It was an eventful meeting for both. Richard Trump Photo.





Old Oscar, the five foot black sturgeon, will probably be seen at the State Fair for the last time this year. Here Old Oscar rests quietly in the number one aquarium in company with some lesser relatives.

## OSCAR THE STURGEON

By E. B. Speaker

Superintendent of Fisheries

ONE HUNDRED TEN pounds, did you say? Right on the button, mister. That's exactly what the big black fish in the number one tank at the State Fair Aquarium weighs.

This huge rock sturgeon is known affectionately to thousands of Iowa State Fair visitors as Old Oscar and he has been a star performer at the exhibit for twenty-one years.

When not being displayed at the fair, Oscar spends his leisure hours in the cool, quiet waters of the Strawberry Point trout hatchery ponds. Old Oscar, like the circus elephant, has his work to do at this station when not entertaining people. Although this large fish is the center of attraction, both at the fair and the hatchery at Strawberry Point, his principal job is that of janitor at the latter. For he cleans up the surplus food, algae and debris not eaten by the more fastidious trout, thus keeping the rearing ponds clean while appeasing his tremendous appetite.

Oscar is a native of Wisconsin and was immigrated to Iowa from his home in the trout hatchery near Madison in 1925 when he was only twenty-five years old. At that time he weighed sixty pounds. When weighed in at the last State Fair in 1941 he weighed ninety pounds and had reached a length of nearly five feet. During the five intervening years he gained twenty pounds but failed to lengthen noticeably and now, at forty-six, Oscar has developed the proverbial middle-aged spread.

The rock sturgeon is found in Iowa and is distributed widely in the Mississippi Valley. Some of its

relatives range from the Red River and Hudson Bay drainage to the north through the St. Lawrence waterways east and down the Mississippi Valley as far south as Alabama.

Rock sturgeons are bottom feeders and in the wild live principally on small plants, animals, crayfish and insects. At one time great hordes of these fishes ascended the streams in spring to spawn in the shoal areas of the lakes. At the present time their numbers are greatly diminished and they are rapidly disappearing from many parts of the country and, by commission action, are on the continuous closed list in Iowa.

Sturgeons are one of the most primitive of the fishes in the midwest. Their head is covered by bony plates and rows of shield-like plates occur on their sides. There are no teeth present in the older fishes and their armor plate is needed for protection.

It is entirely possible that Oscar's name should be changed to Emma. Be that as it may, fair visitors have known the great fish as Oscar for nearly a quarter of a century and the big sturgeon will have to take on more definite feminine characteristics than merely a contrary nature before we change it.

### IT'S A LONG WAY TO ELDORA

Roy Chastain, conservation officer in charge of Pine Lake State Park, recently received a letter from H. W. Johnson, a marine stationed in Kyushu, Japan, requesting a cabin reservation at the park, with the explanation, "I am contemplating a discharge from the service. I am looking forward to a continuous civilian 'career.' Before I start on this career, however, I would like a month or thereabouts of so-called peace (civilian style)."

Rest and success are fellows.—John Ray.

## What Mammal . . .

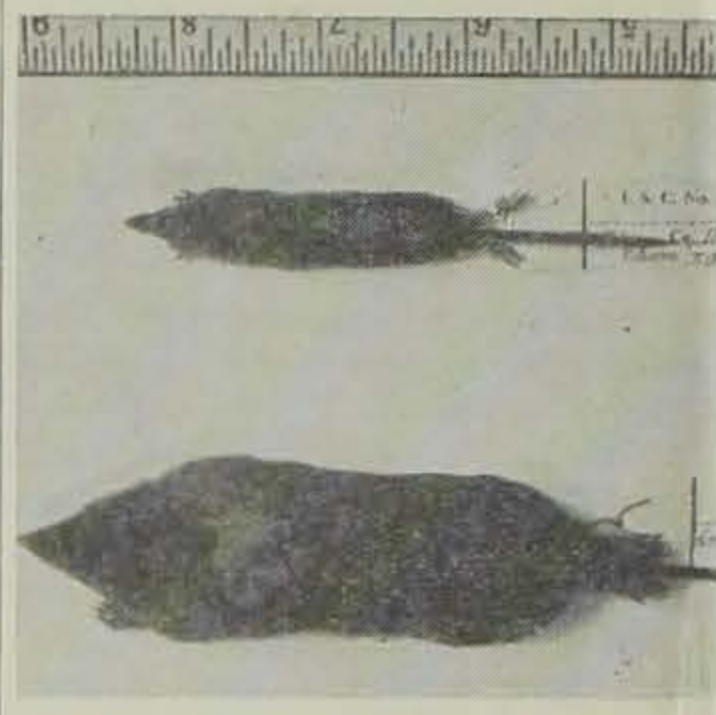
(Continued from page 57)

made it possible for the settlers to survive the early days in Iowa. The severe cold of winter demanded sturdy homes, warm clothing, and heat-yielding foods. Sometimes two winters passed before the land could be brought under cultivation, and even then there was little chance of marketing the bulky products, for roads were not good and railroads were not always near. During this period of early adjustment the utilization of mammals was essential, and they were hunted to man's advantage. Not only were they utilized directly in the preparation of food, clothing, candles, and other items of need, but their skins were of such value that they could be exchanged for cash or bartered for the essentials. When the settlers learned that money could be earned through the sale of skins, many of them turned to hunting and trapping as a profession.

With the building of roadways and extension of the railroads, the settlers found agricultural operations progressively more profitable. New settlers came, miles of fences were built, and more land was placed under cultivation. Depletion of such large mammals as the elk and buffalo was inevitable. Other mammals that were present during the early days but have since disappeared are the black bear, mountain lion and Canada lynx. It is probable that the timber wolf also no longer occurs, as all attempts to run down recent reports have revealed mistaken identification of coyotes. There is some evidence to indicate that the pronghorn antelope and an occasional caribou came into the northwest corner of the state during the early days. Settlement of the land seemed to accompany an increase in the numbers of some mammals. The cottontail, pocket gopher, fox squirrel, white-tailed jack rabbit, and others probably benefited by agricultural developments.

### Classification

What about these formidable looking names that scientists use to identify mammals? Perhaps this mystery can best be clarified by



The shrews are interesting mole-like animals. Their forefeet, however, are not enlarged and they have external ears. Most predators seem to avoid these animals as food. Below, large short-tailed shrew; above, common shrew. Tom Scott Photo.

describing the method used for classification of mammals. Mammals are placed in classes and given names principally according to differences in fur, size, feet and skull. The general scheme of classification is to start with large groups of mammals possessing certain similar general characteristics. These large groupings are in turn divided into smaller lots on the basis of other characteristics, and by a series of separations the scheme finally arrives at the species or kind of mammal.

For an example of the scheme of classification let us trace through the groupings a particular species, the common mole. First we have the Class Mammalia in which all mammals are included. Next we turn to the Subclass Eutheria (all mammals except the egg-laying mammals); then the Order Insectivora (mammals of small size, primitive structure, teeth in a continuous row, and specialization for an insect diet); the Family Talpidae (all moles, animals with shovel-like forefeet, adapted for digging underground); the Genus *Scalopus* (moles without a fleshy fringe on the nose and with short naked tails); and finally the Species *aquaticus*. Thus, other mammals and groups are ruled out and we identify our specimen as the common mole. When its scientific name is written, only these last two names (those of the genus and species) are used, and in this instance we

(Continued on page 64)



The opossum is about the size of a cat, with a whitish face, pointed nose, bare rounded ears, and a scaly prehensile tail.



## COMMISSION ACTION JULY, 1946

The July meeting of the Conservation Commission was held at Gull Point Lake Reserve on Lake Okoboji July 8 and 9, 1946. Members present were E. G. Gaunitz, James C. Jenson, F. W. Mattes, F. J. Poyneer, R. E. Stewart and Ewald G. Trost.

### The Commission:

Reappointed F. W. Mattes chairman and Mrs. Addison Parker vice chairman for the coming fiscal year.

Accepted gift offered by G. W. Clark, Fort Dodge, of oil painting of Governor Robert Lucas, to be hung in the Lucas House at Iowa City.

Expressed appreciation to Nancy McClelland for donation of wallpaper for Governor Lucas House. Authorized placing Governor Blue's name on commission stationery and "Iowa Conservationist" mathead.

Approved construction of self-contained mobile traveling exhibit to be ready for the 1947 fair season.

Authorized acceptance of option to purchase right of way road property south of Lake Manawa at \$1.00.

Adopted resolution favoring two bills in congress prohibiting the drawdown of Mississippi River pools except in dire emergencies.

Approved rating system for conservation officers, effective immediately.

Authorized appointment of a conservation officer from the eligibility list to fill the position vacated by Ed Sybil.

Authorized director to proceed with necessary emergency repairs to dam and spillway at Lake Wapello immediately from Fish and Game funds.

Accepted Brudick option for 100 on strip of land along east side of Commission's Brown Lake property for construction of an all-weather road to the lake.

Approved development plan for Biglow Park on Brown's Lake.

Approved recommendation that building at Brown's Lake be sold to the Izaak Walton League for the \$250 the organization paid for the lease.

Approved continuance of Fish and Game Cooperative Research program being carried on at Iowa State College.

Accepted and approved easement for improvement of a public highway adjacent to the Ringgold County Wildlife Area.

Approved Glenn Hoffman's application for a scientific collector permit.

Agreed to cooperate with the Izaak Walton Club in soil erosion work on the watershed areas of Upper and Lower Pine Lakes near Eldora.

Approved request of Mr. Harrison Dickey to place steps from his property at Pillsbury Point to Lake Okoboji in accordance with plans approved by the Lands and Waters Division.

Adjourned.

Reconvened July 9.

Instructed Fish and Game superintendent to convey recommendations for first and second choice for migratory waterfowl season to the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service by telephone.

Appointed Paul Leaverton of Humboldt Assistant Superintendent of Game.

Appointed Walter W. Trusell of Sioux City to the position of Supervisor of Predator Control.

Approved transfer of Robert Cooper from Strawberry Point Hatchery as Fisheries Superintendent to the Spirit Lake Hatchery as Fisheries Supervisor.

Approved part-time employment of Mathew Roche as lake patrolman at Twin Lakes.

Accepted resignation of Raymond R. Phillips, farm forester stationed at Dubuque.

Denied request of Leslie M. Rude to purchase part of the lake shore of Wall Lake south of Jewell.

Granted request of the City of Bedford to construct a booster installation inside the Lake of Three Fires Park area.

Denied request of J. E. Schlott to construct a boathouse on state property at Lake Manawa.

Approved payment of the regular salary to conservation officers who were employed by the commission for a length of time equal to the probationary period before taking and passing the conservation officer examinations.

Authorized the making of a request for approval in giving training to veterans under the G. I. Bill of Rights.

Meeting adjourned.

No topic in the wildlife field is more controversial than that of predator relationships, and on none perhaps is there more loose thought and positive opinion passed on insufficient consideration of the evidence that is available.

Science moves, but slowly, creeping on from point to point.—Tennyson.

The owl is not accounted the wiser for living retiredly.—Thomas Fuller.



Prior to 1921 fish were displayed in a series of ordinary stock tanks. The specimens were lifted out of the tank in dip nets so that they could be examined. The overflow about the tanks filled the duck puddle seen at the left of this picture taken in about 1920.

## State Fair . . .

(Continued from page 57)

bert's Folly," but time has proved the expenditure to have been one of great value.

The first construction in what is now the fish and game building was the beautiful aquarium. It was built in 1921. The next year the present walls were built and the fair crowds of that year enjoyed an outstanding exhibit of fish and game in a building only half roofed over. Before the next fair the building was completed in its present form, and although the exhibit within the building itself changes from year to year, no major alterations have been made on the building since 1923.

The exhibits for the past twenty-five years have followed a general pattern with major displays of native fish, game birds and animals forming the nucleus. Many minor exhibits have been placed and some of these have been crowd pleasers. This is particularly true of the reptile display. Although the invariable comment of the spectators is, "I just can't stand snakes," the congestion at the reptile cages has necessitated spreading this exhibit out so that all the crowd can see in the cases.



The beautiful Fish and Game Building at the fair grounds was completed in 1923, but at fair time that year the building was only half roofed over. No major changes have been made on this structure since its completion in the fall of that year. Sarwin Photo.

The fish and game show at the fair has a more serious purpose than merely to entertain, and although it is considered to be one of the most entertaining of this great fair's shows, its true value lies in the fact that the visitors leave the building with a better understanding of the needs of wildlife.

It is a tremendous task to get the show ready each year, and it is a job that is participated in by all members of the conservation organization. One of the most important parts is collecting the various specimens that are seen at the show. Only a small part of the animals and fish are held over year after year. Many of them are, of course, common and easy to secure; however, it is the rare and unusual specimens that give the show its snap and sparkle and it is for these that employees are on watch several months ahead of exhibit time.

The bulk of the fish shown are taken by fish collection and rescue crews from the overflow waters of the Mississippi in the course of their regular work. Unusual specimens are placed in holding ponds until fair time and are then transported in live fish trucks to the show. After the fair most of the display fish are released in public fishing waters where they may be taken by anglers.

With the abandonment of the Ledges Zoo as a war measure, practically all of the birds and animals shown are cripples from the wild or specimens seized as contraband from individuals who have taken them illegally from the wild. At the close of the current fair, birds and animals able to care for themselves will be released in suitable habitats, the remainder will be held over at the game farm at Boone.

The difference between the southern muskrat and the northern muskrat is chiefly a difference of texture and distribution of fur fiber. The salt water marshes of Louisiana produce peltries in which the hair is coarser and of a scarser growth than is found in the sweet water peltries.

When a man assumes a public trust, he should consider himself as public property.—Thomas Jefferson.





The most abundant poisonous snake in Iowa is the deadly timber rattler, one of the most venomous reptiles of the world. Several Iowa counties pay bounty on rattlesnakes to the tune of several hundred dollars each year at fifty cents per.

## IN CASE OF SNAKE BITE

WE HAVE in Iowa four representatives of the pit vipers and all are poisonous. These are the massasauga (*Sistrurus catenatus catenatus*) found mostly in the southern and eastern halves of the state; the timber rattlesnake (*Crotalus horridus horridus*), found chiefly in the eastern half of the state; the prairie rattlesnake (*Crotalus viridis viridis*), occurring chiefly in the northwest corner in Woodbury and Plymouth counties; and the copperhead (*Akistrodon mokasen mokasen*), found to date in Lee and Van Buren counties only.

These are the only dangerous snakes we have and they are not common as are the garter- and bullsnakes.

The pit vipers have thickened, somewhat triangular shaped heads, bulky, heavy bodies with short, thickened tails. Naturally the rattlesnakes have rattles which definitely identify them. The copperhead does not have rattles, but its coloration aids in quick identification. Its head is bright coppery brown. The body is light brown with distinct hour-glass-shaped copper-brown bands.

Bites from the massasauga and copperhead are seldom fatal. The timber rattler is much more dangerous because it is a larger snake, hence it is capable of injecting a greater amount of poison. The prairie rattler is of little importance in Iowa because of its uncommon occurrence in the state.

A bite from a non-poisonous snake is similar to a series of pin-pricks arranged in the shape of a "U." The bite of a pit viper leaves two punctures rather close together where the fangs enter the flesh.

Any snake bite is potentially dangerous. Even if bitten by a

gartersnake a person should apply a disinfectant as soon as possible to the punctured area to prevent the possibility of infection.

A bite from a poisonous snake demands immediate attention. Venom may affect a victim in one of two ways: by action on the nerve centers and by destruction of the red blood cells. The coral snakes in the United States and the cobras, mambas, and sea snakes elsewhere in the world, all have predominately neurotoxic venom which is very quick acting. Unfortunately, this venom usually affects first the nerve center which controls breathing. Consequently, partial or complete suffocation is the cause of death.

Our pit vipers and the true vipers of other continents have venom that is predominately haemolytic. It destroys red blood cells and disrupts capillaries. If a sufficient quantity of red blood cells is destroyed by the venom, it is impossible to carry enough oxygen from the lungs to the body and the victim is in reality suffocated.

Since blood venom is generally slower acting than nerve venom, individuals bitten by rattlesnakes and their kin have more time to receive a doctor's treatment before resulting fatality than if they were bitten by a coral snake.

The degree of danger inherent to a bite by a poisonous snake depends upon the size of the snake, puncture of flesh by one or both fangs, condition of the snake as to recent prior discharge of venom, protection afforded to the victim in the form of heavy trousers, leggings or boots, locality of the bite, whether on extremities or close to the body, and size of the victim.

A large snake is capable of carrying more venom and injecting it deeper than a small snake. Less venom may be injected by one fang than by two. A snake that has re-

cently discharged venom into a preceding victim will probably have its poison sacs somewhat depleted. An individual with good leg protection is assured of considerable immunity from venom injection. A bite on the foot, finger or hand is less serious than one on the thigh, body or head. Fatality among children bitten by poisonous snakes is much higher than that for adults in good health.

A person bitten by a snake should identify it as to poisonous or harmless. If he thinks it is a poisonous snake he should remain as calm as possible. Excitement and panic increase the rate of blood circulation with more disastrous results. An examination of the wound can often reveal the status of the bite. A series of punctures in the shape of a "U" indicates a harmless snake. Only one or two punctures indicates a poisonous snake. Such a wound will probably begin to evidence sharp pain, swelling and discoloration soon after its infliction. In this case apply a tourniquet between the bite and the heart, but do not leave it on longer than ten minutes, else there is danger of contracting gangrene. Release it slowly, allow the blood to circulate for half a minute, then apply the tourniquet again. This process should be repeated until the first-aid measures have been completed. These involve sterilizing the wound and making two short incisions one-fourth inch deep across each fang puncture. These incisions should form a cross. If you have no mouth abrasions, suck the incisions to withdraw as much venom as possible. Continue this for half an hour. In the meantime get to the nearest doctor as quickly but with the least exercise as possible. Injection of antivenin should be done by a doctor.

Stimulants in the form of coffee or a teaspoonful of aromatic spirits of ammonia in a glass of water are often helpful to some people in preserving their courage and preventing undue excitement. Alcoholic drinks are harmful and should not be used.

A weak solution of potassium permanganate can be used for a wound antiseptic. Raw grains of it should not be rubbed into the cuts. Nor should cauterizing with acid, a hot iron or burning with gunpowder be used. Any one of these measures greatly increases the probability of tissue infection. Don't waste a chicken by applying its viscera to the wound.

A person in snake country who keeps his feet and legs protected and who looks before he reaches is subscribing to good insurance against snake bite.

A hen blue wing teal banded at Leech Lake in the Yorkton area of Saskatchewan was bagged the following day near Princeton, Minnesota. The airline distance from Yorkton to Princeton is 563 miles.

Iowa commercial fishermen catch almost 4,000,000 pounds of marketable fish each year on the Missouri and Mississippi rivers.

## ONE HUNDRED DOLLAR REWARD FOR DEER SHOOTING

The Bancroft Sportsmens Club is offering a reward of one hundred dollars for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the person who shot a deer in the Bancroft vicinity recently. The sportsmen are posting a similar reward for the arrest and conviction of anyone shooting deer in the vicinity in the future.

The Bancroft neighborhood was the range of five deer during the winter. One was caught in a fence and killed. One is known to be crippled from gun shot wounds, and one, found crippled by gun shot wounds last week, died before R. E. Wever, local veterinarian, could be called.

According to the Bancroft Register, there are still three deer in the herd and local sportsmen have promised to take drastic steps if they are further molested.

## WHY THE STATE FAIR FISH AND GAME EXHIBIT

By Bruce F. Stiles  
Chief, Division of Fish and Game

A new era has dawned in conservation. Through the mists the horizon is broadening. Finally, and yet incompletely, we glimpse the entire picture, the interdependence of each phase of conservation upon every other.

We have reached the transition period. Conservation is beginning to and must supplant exploitation. The men who felled the forests, cultivated the earth, spanned the rivers with bridges of steel, built the railways and canals, the great ships and locomotives, have been able to do so only because of the bounty of our resources. Our pioneers were exploiters of our natural resources because it was expedient for them. We must be conservationists because it is expedient for us.

The conservation of our wildlife is but a single segment in the great conservation movement, yet it goes hand in hand with the conservation of our soil, water, and forests. Proper land, timber, and water use form the only permanent means by which we can increase and perpetuate wildlife.

The birds and animals and the fishes on exhibit at the State Fair serve to interest and amuse many people, but back of all this lies a deeper motive. The display is designed as a sugar-coated pill attracting the attention of the public to the end that the importance of conservation may be impressed upon the consciousness of the people, who in the end determine the rate of progress or retrogression of a state or a nation.



## STATE GETS JURISDICTION OVER 7,000 ACRES OF MISSISSIPPI RIVER WILDLIFE LANDS

By F. T. Schwob  
Conservation Director

IOWA sportsmen, especially those in southeastern Iowa, will be pleased to know that the State Conservation Commission has approved and accepted a permit issued by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service to use a part of the land and water now in federal ownership and under jurisdiction of the U. S. Army engineers in Louisa and Des Moines counties along the Mississippi River as public shooting grounds and wildlife refuge management areas.

The permit to the State of Iowa through the State Conservation Commission was granted in accordance with, and subject to, the provisions of the permit granted by the War Department to the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service as approved by the War Department on January 17, 1946, under the authority granted in the "Flood Control Act" (Pub. 534, 78th Congress) approved December 22, 1944.

The permit covers a five-year period commencing October 1, 1945, and ending September 30, 1950, and may be extended or renewed. All improvement or development plans must be approved by the officer of the army having immediate jurisdiction over the premises.

Included in this permit is the tract known as the Lake Odessa Area, one of the best wildlife and recreational areas in the state. This 6,500-acre area extends from just below Port Louisa on the Mississippi River to a point just below Toolesboro and from the bluff to the river.

The Fish and Wildlife Service has kept under its jurisdiction a section in the northeast part of the area and another in the south part or sanctuaries wherein no hunting or trapping will be permitted. The balance will be under the jurisdiction of the State Conservation Commission and will be public hunting, fishing, trapping and general recreation areas.

The tract, originally a fine wildlife area, was made a part of the Muscatine-Louisa County drainage and levee district in the 1920's. A levee was built along the river and

a drainage ditch was placed in the Muscatine Slough which runs through Lake Odessa and lateral ditches drained the water into the main ditch and to a pumping plant at the levee in the lower end of the area. This drainage project destroyed much of its recreational value. Because of the limited amount of land that was successfully drained and that could produce agricultural crops this part of the drainage district was constantly in financial difficulties. The construction of Lock and Dam No. 17 along the area in the Mississippi River caused the abandonment of this part of the Muscatine-Louisa County drainage district several years ago and the U. S. army engineers acquired the entire area as a part of the flood plain of the Mississippi River necessary in the development of the nine-foot channel lock and dam system.

Since the abandonment of the drainage district the area has returned to a natural wildlife haven. It is considered one of the best waterfowl areas in the state and provides fine duck hunting for hundreds of hunters.

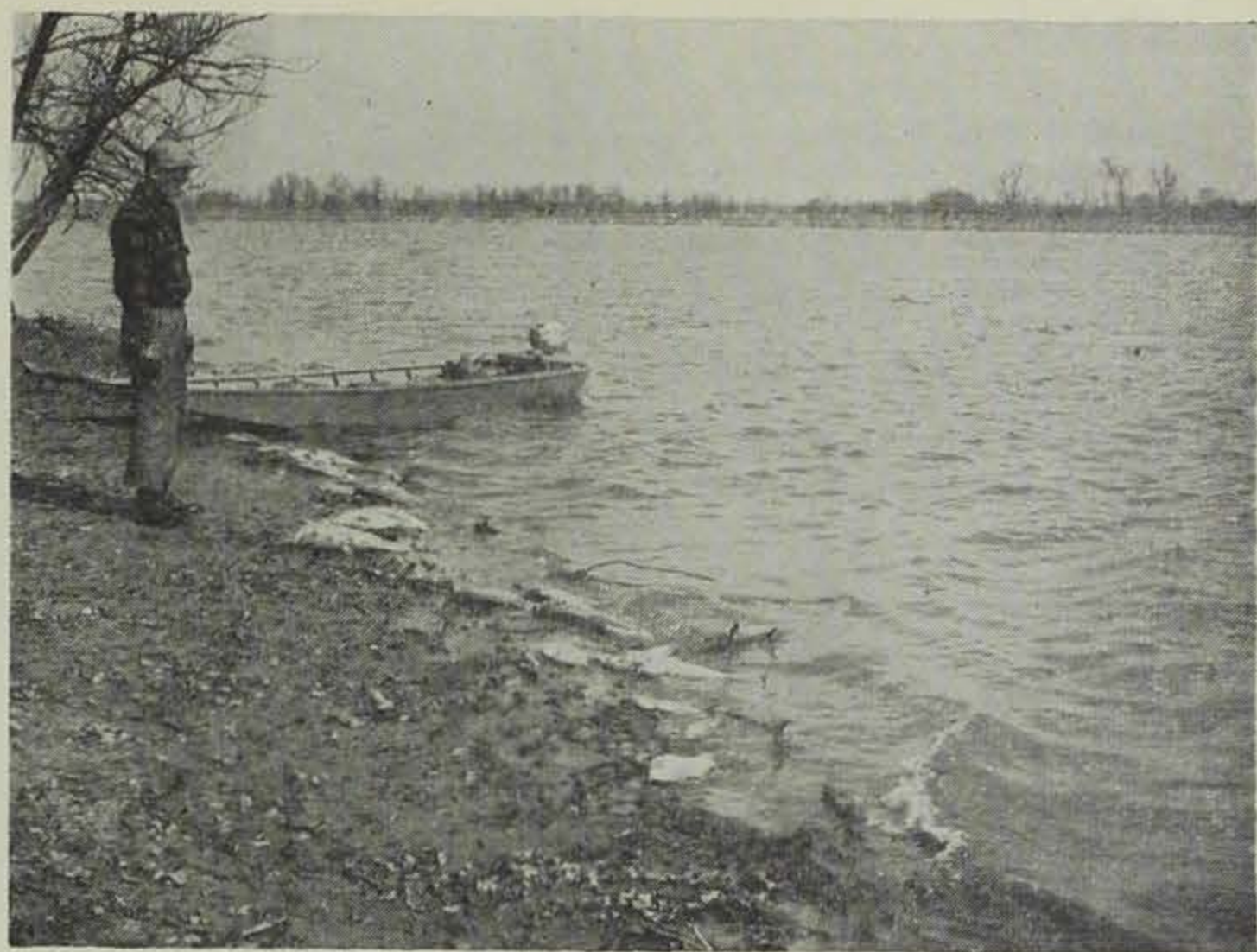
If an outlet control structure can be built at the lower end outlet so that water levels can be stabilized and enough water retained in the area to maintain fish life during the critical winter period, it will provide some of the finest bass and pan fish fishing in the state and at the same time improve its value for migratory waterfowl and fur bearing animals.

Public access, parking facilities, and places to launch boats so the area can be used by the public, are included in the development plans. Each island and tract of land will be posted with appropriate signs stating that they are public recreational areas.

Obtaining the permit for these recreational lands and waters is in accordance with the policy of the Conservation Commission to acquire jurisdiction over every available acre possible of sub-marginal lands such as these tracts and restoring and developing the areas for maximum production of fish and game to provide more and better fishing, hunting, and natural places for general outdoor recreation.

Section 4 of the "Flood Control Act" reads as follows:

"The Chief of Engineers, under the supervision of the Secretary of War, is authorized to construct, maintain, and operate public park and recreational facilities in reservoir areas under the control of the War Department, and to permit the construction, maintenance, and operation of such facilities. The Sec-



Conservation Officer Dan Nichols surveys the damage caused by a winter freeze-out on Lake Odessa, the result of drainage and low water.

retary of War is authorized to grant leases of lands, including structures or facilities thereon, in reservoir areas for such periods and upon such terms as he may deem reasonable: **Provided**, that preference shall be given to federal, state, or local governmental agencies, and licenses may be granted without monetary consideration, to such agencies for the use of areas suitable for public park and recreational purposes, when the Secretary of War determines such action to be in the public interest. The water areas of all such reservoirs shall be open to public use generally, without charge, for boating, swimming, bathing, fishing, and other recreational purposes, and ready access to and exit from such waters shall be maintained for general public use, when such use is determined by the Secretary of War not to be contrary to the public interest, all other such rules and regulations as the Secretary of War may deem necessary. No use of any area to which this section applies shall be permitted which is inconsistent with the laws for the protection of fish and game of the state in which such area is situated."

The permit includes the following land and water areas:

Louisa County—

Island No. 343 in Sections 9, 10, 15, 16, 75NR2W, approximately 110 acres.

Flowage tract No. 18, 19, 20, 14, 21, 22, 27, 30, 31, 32, 33, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, part of 41, 42, 43, 44, 47, 48, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64 and 65, containing approximately 880 acres between the Muscatine Island Levee District Levee and the Mississippi River in sections 16, 17, 20, 21 and 29, 75NR2W.

A part of the Lake Odessa Area, Flowage tracts 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 162, 163, 164, 157, 156, 155, 154, 153, 152, 151, 150, 149, 148, 147, 144, 135, 138, 139, 137, 136, 142, 141, 140, 119, located in Sections 2, 34, 35, 33, 28, 27, 26, 36, 29,

21, 20, 17, 18, 7, 8, T74NR2W, containing approximately 2,900 acres.

All of Turkey Island in Sections 15, 16, 21, 22, T74NR2W, containing approximately 380 acres.

That part of Atter Island more than one-quarter mile above Dam No. 17, containing approximately 105 acres.

Island No. 354, known as Brass Island, containing approximately 20 acres.

Island No. 73, containing approximately 10 acres.

Islands No. 70, 69, 67, 66, 65, 64, 63, 62, 54, 55, 53, 50, 49, 48, 57, 58, 59, 60, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, containing 565 acres.

Flowage tracts No. 51, 51A, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, lying between Flint Creek Levee District Levee and the Mississippi River in sections 6, 5, 32, 8, 9, 16, 21, 28, 27, 34, T75NR2W, containing 205 acres.

Black Hawk Island No. Ia. Island 51 in Sections 22 and 27, T73NR2W containing approximately 500 acres.

Des Moines County—

Garner Island Tract No. Ia. Island No. 42 in Sections 9, 10 and 13, T72NR1W, containing approximately 78 acres.

Ia. Island Tract No. 45 in Sections 9, 10, 3 T22NR1W, containing 8 acres.

Iowa Island Tract No. 37 in Section 9 T22NR1W containing 4 acres.

Flowage Tract No. 32, 33, 34 and 35, lying between Flint Creek Levee and the Mississippi River in Section 3 T72NR1W, containing 136 acres.

That part of Huron Island in Flowage Tracts Iowa Islands 29, 31, 32, 33 and 38 in Sections 9, 10, 6 T72NR1W, containing approximately 305 acres.

Tract Ia. Island No. 30 in Section 16 T72NR1W, containing 3 acres.

Tract Ia. Island No. 359 in Section 10 T72NR1W.

Little Cody Island Tract No. Ia. (Continued on page 64)



Much of the 6,500 acres in the Lake Odessa area is excellent duck hunting territory. In fact, the area is considered one of the finest hunting and fishing grounds in the entire state.



## Fair Visitors . . .

(Continued from page 57)

Mac had arranged for a special showing of "his animals" to a group including several school teachers, one night after the building was closed to the public for clean up. It was his mistake to let other employees know of his plans in advance, and, in place of his harmless skunk, the "boys" substituted an animal with a full complement of artillery. All went well with the tour until the final demonstration, handling Mac's pet skunk. Then it happened.

Mac's raving passion was a fearful and wonderful thing and it was the inspiration for the best kept secret in the annals of fish and game.

Even now, the vision of this faithful public servant sitting outside the building whetting a hook-nosed knife designed for pruning peach trees is too vivid to reveal "who dunnit."

Sammy called it quits, too, shortly after Mac's death.

Sammy was the magnificent, buck white-tailed deer that ruled the outdoor deer pen at the fairgrounds for almost ten years. Sammy, an orphan, was started on a bottle by Mac when the fawn's spindly little legs were still too weak to support his emaciated body. Sammy broke his neck in a suicidal rage in 1943 when a handler attempted to move him into a new deer range.

Sammy, like Mac, was a showman extraordinary, and the two seemed to have a gentlemen's agreement, for when Mac was putting on his act Sammy remained inconspicuous. When Sammy had the floor, Mac would pout a little but never try to steal the show.

It was when the two were playing a duet that keeper, deer and visitors were most happy. Possibly the best remembered of their acts was the tobacco chewing skit.

At feeding time Mac would enter the deer yard, place mash in the feed trough, and busily engage in cleaning up the pen. Sammy, meanwhile, would daintily dispose of his supper. When finished, the deer would approach the working man and nudge him several times none too gently in the back with the curve of his well-formed ant-



Sammetoo, an orphan, now a yearling buck, is being groomed to take Sammy's place in the hearts of fair visitors. Sammetoo, you have a big job ahead of you. Jim Sherman Photo.



Mac and Sammy were the colorful team who for many years played Punch and Judy at the State Fair Fish and Game Exhibit.

lers. Apparently perplexed, Mac would turn around, remove his hat and scratch his head with one hand, with the other reach in his pocket for a plug of tobacco and take a bite. With the amazing speed of wild things, Sammy would bite off a sizeable chunk of the plug still in his keeper's hand. When Mac scolded the animal for his theft, Sammy would look up into his face with sober, big-eyed attention and solemnly chew his stolen tobacco in perfect imitation of the old man.

The pantomime invariably closed when Mac would turn and wink at the now large human audience, open the deer yard gate, and step out. But Sammy always had the last word. Looking straight at Mac's retreating back he would pucker up his lips and blow the small boy's raspberry, "Phut-t-t-t."

Mac and Sammy, we miss you both.

## State Gets Jurisdiction . .

(Continued from page 63)

Island 24 in Section 22 T72NR1W, containing 70 acres.

Penn Island (Pin Island) Tract No. 1a. Island 22 in Sections 22 and 27 T72NR1W, containing 20 acres.

Ia. Island No. 17, 18, 19 in Section 27 T72NR1W, containing 14 acres.

Camp Island or Tract Ia. Island No. 13 and Little Nigger Island or

Tract Ia. Island No. 12 in Section 34 T72NR1W, containing 70 acres.

Ia. Island Tract No. 10 in Sections 15, 22 T71NR1W, containing 38 acres.

Ia. Island Tract No. 9 in Sections 21, 22 T71NR1W.

Flowage tracts 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, between Iowa River Flint Creek Levee and Mississippi River in Sections 34, 3, 10, 15, 21, 22, T71&72-NR1W, containing approximately 430 acres.

Eagle Island in Sections 29, 32, T72NR1W, containing approximately 150 acres.

That part of Aquaoka Island located in Sections 27 and 28, T71NR1W, containing 35 acres.

Long Island in Sections 27 and 28 T71NR1W, containing 20 acres.

## THERE IS SOMETHING IN COMMON

There are a few men who continually catch limits of trout. I can see them, each a different individual, but each possessing a common characteristic. This common virtue, if it may be so called, is that they meet on common level at the edge of the creek. There's that sedate banker from Davenport or that one-armed fellow from Illinois or the clever doctor from Sterling, the buxom gal from Wisconsin and all the rest of the motley group. They all love to fish. They respect one another's rights.

## What Mammal . . .

(Continued from page 60)

have *Scalopus aquaticus*. Scientific names need not be used except by the research worker, who must record them so that there will be no doubt as to what mammal is meant. For example, the mole is known by many common names such as garden mole, lawn mole, common mole, etc., which might lead to the belief that there are several different kinds.

### Iowa Mammals

**The Opossum:** The "possum" is so well known as scarcely to require description. It is an animal about the size of a cat with a whitish face, pointed nose, bare rounded ears, and a scaly prehensile tail. The fur is composed of long coarse hair and soft underfur, which may show variation from the usual gray color. The long over or guard hair may be black, giving a dark phase, or the underfur brown-tipped, giving a brown appearance. There are five toes on each foot, and all except the inside toe of each hind foot are equipped with claws.

**Moles and Shrews:** The moles are readily known by their broad, shovel-like fore feet. The eyes are small and hidden in the fur, there is no external ear, and the snout is long and pointed. The common mole is found throughout Iowa. It is possible that another mole, the star-nosed mole, may be found in northern Iowa. The star-nosed mole has a fringe of fleshy processes on the snout.

The shrews are small mole-like mammals; however, their fore feet are not enlarged, and they have external ears. Shrews are sometimes confused with mice; but they may be known by the long, pointed muzzle, the very small eye, and the continuous row of reddish teeth. In Iowa there are four kinds, two of which are long-tailed and two short-tailed. Small shrews with tails that are at least two-thirds the length of the body are found in the northern half of the state. These are the masked shrew and Hoy's shrew, the latter being the smallest mammal in Iowa and very rare. Both these shrews are less than four inches in total length.

Shrews with very short tails, less than one-third the length of the body, are found throughout the state. They are the large short-tailed shrew and the little short-tailed shrew. They may be separated by size, the small measuring about three inches from tip of tail to tip of nose and the larger, five inches. The large short-tailed shrew is the one most often found.

(Concluded next month)

They'll bum you for worms or give you a sandwich with equal alacrity. Fib a little? Yes, there is a trace of it in all of them. A ten-inch trout may grow six inches over night, or a 15-pound catfish may take on another "five" in a few hours—but that's just fishin'.

—Bellevue Leader

Every science has been an outcast. —Ingersoll.